

# PROTECTING YOUR KIDS ONLINE

## TAKE CHARGE

### Set some ground rules.

Establish basic guidelines like when your kids can go online, what sites they can visit, and how many texts they can send a month, so everyone is on the same page.

### Research before you buy.

Did you know that handheld games can connect to the Internet or that many laptops have built-in webcams? Understand what technology you're bringing into your home.

### Don't just sit there—REPORT!

If your kids are dealing with cyberbullies or potential predators, report them to the website, cell phone service, law enforcement, or [www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com).

## MONITOR

### Supervise Internet use.

If you can see what your kids are doing, they're less likely to get in trouble.

### Safeguards ≠ Safe Kids.

Installing CIA-level monitoring software on your kids' computers does not guarantee they'll be safe online. Technology can't replace your time and attention as a parent or guardian.

### Don't go overboard.

It's smart to keep an eye on your kids' social networking profiles, but it's never cool when you post embarrassing messages or pictures to their page.

## COMMUNICATE

### Talk to your kids; they're not as mysterious as you think.

Your kids might not tell you everything, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't ask. Get involved so you're not the last to know.

### Challenge them to a duel.

If you have kids who like to play video or computer games, ask if you can play, too. When you respect their interests, they're more likely to respect your rules.

### Don't pull the plug.

Taking away your kids' Internet access because they've done something wrong doesn't solve the problem. Talk to them about protecting themselves and respecting others online.